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On anniversary of Iraq war

Students walk out from coast to coast

By Ben Carroll and Dante Strobino

Raleigh FIST
Raleigh, N.C.



The fourth anniversary of the beginning of the criminal war on Iraq was not observed quietly on many of this country's university and high school campuses. More than 80 universities and high schools across the U.S. participated in a National Day of Student Action Against the War, initiated by the newly re-founded Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

At a youth and student caucus called for by SDS at this past year's School of the Americas (SOA) demonstration, more than 100 youth and student organizers from more than 20 universities and high schools came together to discuss how the youth movement would organize around the fourth anniversary of the war. It was unanimously decided by those in the room that SDS would call for a national day of student walkouts on March 20, the fourth anniversary of the war.

The March 20 Call to Action was drawn up and broadly distributed at the beginning of 2007. Like a wildfire the call spread across the U.S., with universities and high schools from New Jersey, Illinois, Alabama, North Carolina, California, Wisconsin, Ohio and elsewhere organizing demonstrations. In addition to the 84 universities and high schools that officially participated, Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), the Campus Antiwar Network (CAN) and Student Peace Action Network (SPAN), among others, endorsed the day of action.

Nationwide, thousands of students at countless universities and high schools stood up and spoke out on March 20. The movement and broad success of the day of action suggests a strong and deepening spirit of resistance within the youth movement, one that will only continue to grow as the slaughter in Iraq by occupation forces continues.

Chapel Hill, N.C.

Student organizers from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) chapter of SDS, along with members of

Raleigh FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—worked for more than a month to build for their walkout. Whether it was plastering fliers around campus, going door-to-door in the university dormitories, working on plans for the day or talking to students and campus organizations about the day of action, organizers worked at a frenzied pace to involve a broad range of students and make March 20 a significant day in the youth movement against the war.

By networking with other campus organizations in Chapel Hill, the walkout received the endorsement of the UNC-CH Black Student Movement (BSM), Solidarity with Palestine through Education and Action at Carolina and Student Action with Workers.

More than 500 youth and students walked out of class and joined an opening rally in the central area of campus, which featured speakers from the endorsing organizations and a spoken word piece by a member of BSM. After being detained by their high school administrators, several students from Raleigh's Green Hope High School managed to walk out and join the UNC rally in a militant defiance of school conduct codes.

Following the short rally, more than 300 students joined the march through campus. Along the way, the mass of youth and students continued to swell as students joined the march. After snaking through campus, the youth spilled into the streets, first shutting down a major road through the campus and then making its way to a major intersection in the city. The youth occupied the intersection for more than twenty minutes, snarling lunchtime traffic and taking a stand against business as usual.

The march then proceeded down the city's main street and back towards campus, shutting down roads on campus and getting into scuffles with Chapel Hill and university police. After an hour, the march ended back at the central area of campus for a closing rally and music from a samba drum corps that participated in the march.

Organizers from SDS, FIST and other campus organizations were excited about the large turnout and characterized the day

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Student walkout at UNC-Chapel Hill, March 20.

PHOTO: ADAM GRAETZ

Sub-prime mortgage lenders prey on aspirations of working families

By Jaimeson Champion

As the U.S. housing market continues to deteriorate, many ruling class politicians and pundits are euphemistically referring to the growing crisis as a "market correction." They insist that the economic hardship is only temporary.

While it may be possible for a millionaire Wall Street analyst to describe the current trouble in the U.S. housing market as a mere market correction, in reality it is a major crisis, particularly for working families across the country. Foreclosure rates and personal bankruptcy filings are soaring. The number of U.S. households involved in foreclosure proceedings grew a record 37 percent in 2006. Working families are being turned out onto the streets in waves.

At the root of the recent spike in foreclosures among working-class households is the predatory practice of sub-prime mortgage lending. Sub-prime mortgage loans are defined as loans to borrowers whose credit score is too low to qualify for traditional fixed-rate mortgage loans. The most prevalent form of sub-prime mortgage loans is known as the "2-28" loan, which typically features a low fixed-interest rate (some as low as 1 to 2 percent) for the first two years of the loan. After the first two years the interest rate increases or "resets" to a new level derived from a rate index. This new rate is larger than the introductory rate, and is then instituted for the remaining life of the loan. These loans are now increasingly being referred to as "exploding" adjustable-rate mortgages.

During the housing bubble of 2000-2006, offers for sub-prime mortgage loans were ubiquitous. Awash in capital, Wall Street bankrolled sub-prime lenders with credit, packaged the loans in the hundreds of billions of dollars, and sold risky bonds to greedy investors. Citigroup, Bank of America, Morgan Stanley and J.P. Morgan Chase, among other predators, sunk their tentacles in almost every corner of this volatile market.

Mortgage brokers sprung up in startup companies with little capital, offering an assortment of adjustable-rate loans through television commercials and billboards exploiting the dreams of homeownership. Working class families were told that if they took out a 2-28 loan to

purchase a new home, they could take advantage of the low introductory rates for the first two years, and then use the equity accrued in the house to refinance when the rate was reset. Lenders were quick to point out that median house prices were rising every year, and implied that potential borrowers would be foolish not to get in while the market was expanding.

While many of these 2-28 loans were sold as "can't miss" opportunities, the recent decline in house values has spelled disaster for borrowers and exposed the sub-prime mortgage loans as Ponzi schemes (creating huge debt based on fake collateral). As the two-year introductory rate period on the loans expires and the rates jump significantly, borrowers find that the homes they purchased have not accrued any value with which to refinance. Debtors are now saddled with sky-high interest rate payments and declining house values. This in turn has led to the record number of foreclosures among working class families.

Black and Latin@ households have been the hardest hit by the recent wave of sub-prime mortgage-induced foreclosures. A recent study by the Consumer Federation of America has shown that Black and Latin@ households are much likelier to be offered a sub-prime loan as compared to white households with similar income levels. (www.consumerfed.org, Sept. 5, 2006)

Institutionalized racism in the lending industry has made it increasingly difficult for Black and Latin@ households to gain access to traditional mortgage loans and many have no choice but to turn to the sub-prime lenders. Recent figures quoted in the Financial Times show that Black families were about four times more likely than whites to get stuck with "exploding" rate mortgage loans in major U.S. cities. (Mar. 15)

Unsold new homes and rising foreclosures have glutted the housing market and will begin to infect other sectors of the capitalist economy. In the coming months the trend of sub-prime induced foreclosures will only be exacerbated as some \$265 billion worth of outstanding sub-prime mortgage debts are set to enter the "reset" phase, plunging more and more families into unmanageable debt. It is important to highlight the glaring injustice of an economic system that turns the human need for housing into an opportunity for exploitation. □

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Barrios hearing filled with supporters

By Arturo J. Pérez Saad
New York

On March 26 supporters of Father Luis Barrios began to congregate in front of the courthouse at 100 Centre St., where his hearing would be held. The crowd swelled to over 50 people who later packed the courtroom. We unfurled a banner outside that read, "The U.N. 16 will not be silent."

Barrios is one of 16 people arrested on Sept. 19, 2006, in front of the United Nations. They were protesting the illegal and immoral war on Iraq while George Bush spoke there with hypocritical slogans such as "the war against terror" and "bringing democracy." Barrios is a long time Puerto Rican liberation fighter and a fighter for justice. All the trumped up charges against all the

others have been dropped, and supporters are demanding no less than that for Father Barrios.

We were moved from courtroom to courtroom; asked to find another judge; asked to wait until the judge was ready; asked to come back in an hour; and finally at 11 a.m. were given another trial date, for May 7 at 9 a.m. Despite these tactics to divide and demoralize the people, we were strong and spirited. When Barrios' name was called by the court officer, all of his supporters would stand up to demonstrate our solidarity with Barrios.

Across the street from the courthouse, Barrios urged us to increase the pressure by calling the attorney general of Manhattan, Robert M. Morgenthau, at 212-335-9000, or writing him at One Hogan Place, New York, NY 10013, to demand that all the charges be dropped. □

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Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latin@, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

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As 60 day hunger strike ends

N.C. protest demands: Free Dr. Sami Al-Arian

By Dante Strobino
Raleigh, N.C., FIST

More than 100 activists and supporters of Dr. Sami Al-Arian rallied near the federal prison in Butner, N.C., March 24 to demand the prisoner's immediate release. There, the condemned supporter of a liberated Palestine had just successfully ended his long hunger strike on its 61st day.

Dr. Al-Arian began his hunger strike on Jan. 22 to protest the federal government's latest stage of harassment. Standing by his principles, Dr. Al-Arian refused to testify in front of the Eastern District of Virginia court and was charged with civil contempt. The federal government then rescinded an earlier ruling to release him on April 16 and prolonged his inhumane incarceration by an additional 18 months. He has already unjustly been in jail since Feb 20, 2003.

Supporters gathered along with Nahla Al-Arian, Dr. Al-Arian's wife, and two of his children because on March 23, a three-judge panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously rejected al-Arian's argument to drop the civil contempt charges. Dr. Al-Arian's hunger strike had come to a powerful ending in the face of state repression.

Dr. Al-Arian's attorney, Linda Moreno, said: "Sami Al-Arian is not in search of death, but is seeking an opportunity for a dignified life. He understands he needs to regain his strength to assist in the fight to release him from federal custody as a result of the violation of the plea agreement by the Justice Department that is responsible for his current incarceration."

During his two-month hunger strike, Dr. Al-Arian lost 55 pounds and his ability to walk. After visiting him last weekend, his family was alarmed at his physical state and deteriorating health. "I was shocked when I saw my husband," Nahla Al-Arian said at the time. "He is rail thin." (<http://freesamialarian.com>)

The local chapter of the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation (MAS FF) had organized the event to help break the media white-out surrounding this case and also to show Dr. Al-Arian and his suffering family the extent of community support for his freedom.

Khalilah Sabra, local director of MAS FF and the event's chief organizer, called the recent ruling "an injustice." She continued: "The appeals court sought what the jury did not [accomplish]. ... the court follows a political agenda that is fascist, racist and oppressive, which is in the interests of their political allies. Along with their secret flights [CIA torture renditions that take place in Kinston, N.C.—D.S.] this is the continuation of torture that this government publicly claims to reject. We talk about oppression and inhumanity in other countries, yet we fail to address our own matter like the use of planes and other torture [methods] that go on right here."

Youth and students who have played an active role in fighting for a free Palestine also attended. Solidarity with Palestine through Education and Action (SPEAC) at the University of N.C.-Chapel Hill, a group recently formed since the violent attacks on three Palestinian students at Guilford College (see www.workers.org/2007/us/nc-0222/), organized for many of its members to attend the event.

Leading SPEAC organizer Salma Mirza said that it is "appalling that he was not acquitted of his charges. ... He has never admitted to supporting 'terrorism.' It is really outrageous what is happening, yet it is really powerful what Dr. Al-Arian has done with his hunger strike. People have died after day 20. Hunger fasters in South Africa did not last longer than 38 days. Gandhi never fasted more than 21 days. [Dr. Al-Arian] has already lost 25 percent of his body weight, 55 pounds."

Tyneisha Bowens, member of the Raleigh youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) said: "It is really powerful that so many people drove out here this morning to Dr. Al-Arian. His case represents a lot that is flawed about our capitalist system and it is important that all stand in solidarity together...We need to continue to bring attention to this case until he is free."

Background to the case

After being traced and followed for over eight years by the federal government for his political perspectives and civil rights activism, Dr. Al-Arian was arrested on Feb. 20, 2003, on charges of supporting



March 24, Butner, N.C.

WW PHOTO: RALEIGH FIST

terrorism, namely sending financial support to organizations participating in the liberation movement in Palestine. He was subsequently fired from his position as an award-winning tenured professor at the University of Southern Florida.

After being repeatedly denied bail, Dr. Al-Arian and his two co-defendants were almost immediately placed into some of the harshest and inhumane prison conditions possible. They were allowed only one 15-minute phone call per month, allowed visits with immediate family only, were given limited access to attorneys, allowed to change undergarments only once a week, allowed to change prison jumpsuits only once every two weeks and held in solitary confinement for 23 hours a day. Dr. Al-Arian was allowed only limited medical attention for his diabetes and asthma, was refused any mattress or pillow, subjected to continuous extremely low temperatures in the cell and subjected to strip-searches three times a day even though he is not allowed contact visits.

These conditions have persisted the entire four years of his imprisonment.

In a letter this February to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, Amnesty International pleaded that "The conditions under which Dr. Al-Arian has been detained both during his pre-trial detention, and since his sentencing, appear to be unacceptably harsh and punitive, contrary to the standards cited above. International standards discourage the

use of prolonged cellular or solitary confinement and provide that prisoners must have access to adequate sanitation, clothing, fresh air and exercise. ... We are concerned by evidence suggesting that some of the harsh treatment, including alleged abuses by guards, has been based, at least in part, on his political background."

Following a ten-year investigation and a six-month trial in which the government was afforded every opportunity to present its case and spend some \$80 million, the jury still was unable to find him guilty of the charges against him. Over 80 witnesses, hundreds of hours of taped conversations, and thousands of pages of documents were presented, all of which led jurors to the same conclusion: The government failed to produce any evidence to support its charges.

Dr. Al-Arian was found innocent of eight of the 16 charges against him, while jurors disagreed on the remaining charges by a count of 10 to 2 favoring his full acquittal. Two others in the case, Ghassan Ballut and Sameeh Hammoudeh, were acquitted of all charges, dealing a final blow to the government's theory in the case.

In Dec. 2005, Dr. Al-Arian was acquitted of all his charges, yet the federal government has kept him in jail in hopes of retrying him. In exchange for Dr. Al-Arian's plea on one of the lesser charges, the government had agreed to drop all remaining charges and expedite his release and voluntary departure to another country. □

Fourteen years since the seizure of L-Block

Interview with Siddique Abdullah Hasan

Siddique Abdullah Hasan, known by the government as Carlos Sanders, was an imam, or prayer leader, for the Sunni Muslims in the prison in Lucasville, Ohio, in 1993. During the 11-day siege he was a spokesperson for the Sunni Muslims, helping to negotiate with the prison administration a peaceful end to the rebellion on April 21. Instead of accolades, the state charged him with the killing of a guard, for which he received a capital sentence, along with four other brave prisoners known as the Lucasville Five. There are only a few levels of appeal left for Hasan at the federal level, but a growing movement of supporters is seeking to overturn his conviction entirely.

Martha Grevatt, member of the Cleveland branch of Workers World Party and the Cleveland Lucasville Five Defense Committee, sent Hasan interview questions. The following are excerpts from the first portion of Hasan's responses. Two additional sections of the interview will follow in future WW issues.

MG: What can you tell us about the history of the Southern Ohio Correction Facility in Lucasville?

Hasan: In the years prior to and partially throughout my stay at SOCF, it had a very violent history. Blacks were either murdered or assaulted by both white staff and white prisoners. ... It was pretty much the Emmett Till syndrome, which was routinely displayed in the Deep South. But when the younger and more aggressive Black prisoners were sent to SOCF in the early '90s, these prisoners outright refused to accept the racism, bigotry and assaults which had become the norm. The table and mindset had changed and whites—both staff and prisoners—were now the victims of racial hatred and violence. This probably explains why so many whites were assaulted and murdered during the

initial hours of the rebellion.

MG: How did the racial, ethnic and economic makeup of the town contrast with that of the prison population?

Hasan: The Appalachian town was exclusively a working class white community that had little or no experience in dealing with Blacks. The prison population consisted of poor whites and inner city Blacks who were poor as church mice. This makeup was a recipe for disaster.

MG: When it replaced the old Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus, were prisoners subjected to a more repressive atmosphere from the beginning? Did this get worse over time?

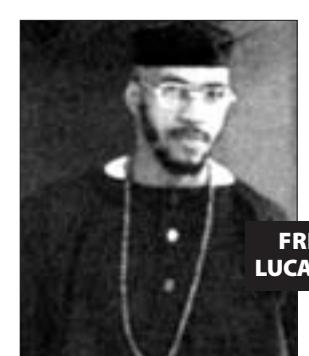
Hasan: According to the older convicts, prison conditions at SOCF were very good initially; however, they became very repressive as years passed. Most

of this came about due to the ongoing violence in the prison—violence that was usually instigated, along racial lines, by prison officials.

MG: What was prison life like at the time of the rebellion? What efforts had been made at negotiating a redress of grievances?

Hasan: Prison life and the atmosphere had become very tense due to overly repressive conditions. Warden Arthur Tate Jr. aka "King Arthur" was brought in to change the atmosphere, makeup and structure of the prison, and he immediately did. He dissolved almost all the constructive programs, and even stripped the college programs down to the bare bones; he prevented a certain class of prisoners from being able to enroll in vocational school; he instituted a policy which forced white supremacists and Black revolutionaries to randomly cell together; moreover, he adopted all types of repressive rules and regulations

Continued on page 4



Siddique Abdullah Hasan

May 17 oral argument set for Mumia Abu-Jamal

The following legal update was sent out March 22.

Re: Mumia Abu-Jamal v. Martin Horn, Pennsylvania Director of Corrections U.S. Court of Appeals Nos. 0 1-90 14, 02-900 1 (death penalty)

Dear Friends:

Today notification was received that oral argument in the case of my client, Mumia Abu-Jamal, is scheduled on Thursday, May 17, 9:30 am, in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Ceremonial Courtroom, 1st Floor, U.S. Courthouse, 6th and Market Streets, Philadelphia. The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., and the National Lawyers Guild, which have filed amicus curiae (friend of the court) briefs, are also participating.

This case concerns Mr. Abu-Jamal's right to a fair trial, the struggle against the death penalty, and the political repression of an outspoken journalist. Racism and politics are threads that have run through this case since his 1981 arrest. The complex issues under consideration, which are of great constitutional significance, include:

Whether Mr. Abu-Jamal was denied the right to due process of law and a fair trial under the Fifth, Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments because of the prosecutor's "appeal-after-appeal" argument which encouraged the jury to disregard the presumption of innocence and reasonable doubt, and err on the side of guilt.

Whether the prosecution's use of peremptory challenges to exclude African Americans from sitting on the jury vio-

lated Mr. Abu-Jamal's rights to due process and equal protection of the law under the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments, and contravened Batson v. Kentucky, 476 U.S. 79 (1986).

Whether the jury instructions and verdict form that resulted in the death penalty deprived Mr. Abu-Jamal of rights guaranteed by the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to due process of law, equal protection of the law, and not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment, and violated Mills v. Maryland, 486 U.S. 367 (1988), since the judge precluded the jurors from considering any mitigating evidence unless they all agreed on the existence of a particular circumstance.

Whether Mr. Abu-Jamal was denied due process and equal protection of



Mumia carries the evidence to prove his innocence in an infamous and racist trial. On May 17 there will be an appeal to retry his case. Support from around the world is more important now than ever.

the law under the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments during post-conviction hearings as the result of the bias and racism of Judge Albert F. Sabo, which included the comment that he was "going to help 'em fry the ni - er".

Recently the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office sent a letter to the court suggesting that the entire Third Circuit should disqualify itself from deciding the case of my client. We filed a reply strongly objecting to this absurd request, explaining that the position of opposing counsel was "utterly unfounded and should be rejected." On March 10 the court rebuked the prosecution, advising that it had failed to follow proper procedure and thus no action would be taken.

Professor Judith L. Ritter, associate counsel, and I are in this case to win a new and fair trial for Mr. Abu-Jamal. The goal is for our client to be free. Nevertheless, he remains in great danger. If all is lost, he will be executed. Your interest in this struggle for human rights and against the death penalty is appreciated.

Yours very truly,
Robert R. Bryan
Lead counsel for Mumia Abu-Jamal

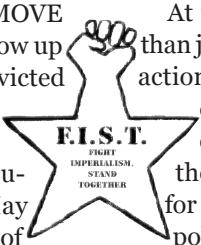
To read the legal update regarding the upcoming oral argument in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Philadelphia, go to www.millions4mumia.org

—Mia Cruz

FIST says:

Support Mumia Abu-Jamal

Award-winning journalist and MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal is now up for his last appeal. Though convicted of murdering a police officer, the evidence proves his innocence. This evidence, through oral arguments, will be presented on May 17 to the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. After 23 years, Pennsylvania will finalize Mumia's fate, be it a new trial, life in prison without parole or execution.



At this point in time, we need more than just moral support. We need direct action, meaning people in the streets demanding Mumia's release. We can no longer be silent. Silence is the equivalent to increasing death for people of color. Silence gives the police the "OK" to shoot 50 bullets into a car of three unarmed men. Silence will annihilate Mumia Abu-Jamal.

May 17 will be a historic day in the

courts, but we also need history to be made in the streets. We are calling for major actions worldwide. Organize in your community and tell the media to cover this case. To hide these actions is to erase the memory of our freedom fighters.

What set Mandela free was the visible support from the people, and this visibility is the only hope that we have for our brother and comrade, Mumia Abu-Jamal.

For updates on actions happening around the world on May 17, visit www.millions4mumia.org

—Mia Cruz



Mia Campbell, Pam Africa and Robert Traynham, March 25.

BOSTON

Mumia Abu-Jamal receives the Sacco-Vanzetti Award

The Community Church of Boston presented the 30th annual Sacco and Vanzetti Social Justice Award to Mumia Abu-Jamal on March 25.

Speakers and performers included the Foundation Movement and Voices Of Liberation. Civil rights attorney Lynne Stewart gave an update on the status of her case and the appeal of her sentencing. In a letter to the judge, James D. Bella wrote, "It is a travesty that she is going to jail. Our legal system needs more lawyers like Lynne."

Pam Africa accepted the award on Mumia's behalf, passionately speaking about Mumia's fight for justice. She spoke about the battle of 'truths and lies' that has been exposed in the fight to win a new trial and ultimately freedom for Mumia.

The meeting culminated with a powerful recorded message from Mumia which



WW PHOTOS: MAUREEN SKEHAN

reminded us of the historical legacies of Mother Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth in Boston and their heroic roles in the historic struggle against slavery.

It is our job to STAND UP and fight to free Mumia and all political prisoners. No Retreat! No Surrender! Revolutionary Love!

—Mia Campbell

Siddique Abdullah Hasan

Continued from page 3

which were contrary to rehabilitation.

While this writer and other prisoners made attempts at addressing various problems and concerns with the prison authorities, Warden Tate was not the type of person who believed in negotiating in good faith. Instead, he adopted the uncompromising policy that SOCF was his prison and it was going to be run his way or no way. His hard-line policy is what actually triggered the prison rebellion.

MG: How did the rebellion start and how did it spread? How many inmates took part? How did it end?

Hasan: It can be summed up as starting over built-up rage and repressive conditions, conditions that are diametrically opposed to rehabilitation.

Anywhere from 18 to 24 prisoners participated in the initial rebellion, and it ended when three prisoner negotiators (myself being one of them) met with attorney Niki Z. Schwartz and negotiated a peaceful surrender.

There was never a plan to be a riot. Instead, there was an initial plan to be a "peaceful protest" about the planned forceful taking of the Mantoux Tuberculin Skin Test, which contains phenol, an alcoholic substance that is unlawful for Muslims to have injected under their forearm. This test was being made mandatory albeit other forms of testing were readily available and would have reached the same medical conclusion.

Although I will concede that the planned inoculation was the last straw

which broke the camel's back, there was a host of other injustices—disciplinary proceedings and administrative control placements that were unfair to prisoners; forced integrated celling with known racists; inadequate medical care; only allowing one five-minute phone call per year to speak to loved ones and friends; mailing and visiting policies that were unfair to prisoners as well as their families and friends; commissary prices that were always escalating, but prisoners' payment for job assignments that has remained immobile for decades; etc.—simultaneously happening within the prison. Prisoners instantaneously seized the opportunity to make it a full-scale rebellion.

MG: What do you think it accomplished? Did the prison administration live up to its part of the settlement?

Hasan: The prison administration did not fully live up to their part of the settlement and the rebellion did not accomplish everything it desired; however, some demands and objectives were met and achieved.

While no amount of material achievements can match up to the punishment, retaliation and sentences prisoners received, the most important thing it accomplished was this: prisoners made it perfectly clear that they would not adopt a happy-go-lucky posture of sitting idle and allowing the system to continue to exploit them without stiff resistance. As one of our predecessors said, "If a man doesn't stand for something, he will fall for anything." □

Flint sit-down strike, part four: Bosses miscalculate

War of words and terror no match for solidarity

By Martha Grevatt

Class war is a science. Working-class strategists learn to expect the unexpected—deep into a period of reaction a rebellion might break out under unlikely circumstances—and remain flexible in their tactics. Theorists on the side of capital, on the other hand, never tire of devising rigid formulas that leave them “greater than” the workers.

In vogue at the time of the Flint sit-down was the Mohawk Valley Formula, developed in 1936 by James H. Rand Jr., head of Remington Rand. Selling it as the master strikebreaking plan business had “hoped for, dreamed of and prayed for,” Rand won its adoption by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM).

Point one of the nine-point program was, “When a strike is threatened, label the union leaders as ‘agitators.’”

The LaFollette Committee of the U.S. Senate, formed to investigate companies’ illegal interference in union organizing, uncovered NAM’s extensive propaganda machine. NAM provided ready-made radio speeches, news cartoons, editorials, advertising and motion pictures to media all too willing to conceal its sponsorship. Twelve thousand local newspapers were given editorials equating unionism with communism, and some 2.5 million column inches of this drivel were published.

Rand did not, of course, invent red baiting. Communists were blamed for the 1934 San Francisco general strike; five Bay Area newspapers formed a council to coordinate anti-red propaganda while the police Crime Prevention Bureau became the Anti-Radical and Crime Prevention Bureau. Meanwhile the leaders of the

Minneapolis Teamsters strike were denounced as radicals in editorials and full-page ads written by the employers.

The war of words alone did little to break the morale of strikers, hence the employment of point four: “Utilize local police, state police, vigilantes and special deputies.” In the years leading up to the sit-down strike, dozens of unionists had been murdered and countless numbers injured, harassed, fired and arrested. Really, Mohawk Valley merely codified a general consensus on tactics shared by the owners of industry.

General Motors followed the formula. They copied from Mohawk Valley the formation of a “Citizens’ Committee,” in this case the Flint Alliance. The Alliance, led by former Flint Mayor and Buick paymaster George Boysen, hired a New York public relations firm to disseminate propaganda stating that a “radical” minority sought to impose a “labor dictatorship” on an “American” citizenry.

“It sounds like Communist talk to me,” cried one Judge Black. He was referring to his inability to enforce an injunction against the sit-down strikers after the UAW revealed that his ownership of 3665 shares of GM stock created a conflict of interest.

When it came to the employment of vigilantes, the du Ponts—who along with the Morgans were the controlling stockholders and shared twelve of the fourteen seats on GM’s Finance Board—were specialists. Richard Sanders, writing on the du Ponts in the magazine *Press for Conversion*, states:

“In the 1930s, the du Pont and Morgan

LABOR HISTORY

family empires dominated the American corporate elite and their representatives were central figures in organizing and funding the [fascist] American Liberty League....

“Du Pont’s General Motors Co. funded a vigilante/terrorist organization to stop unionization in its Midwestern factories. Called the ‘Black Legion,’ its members wore black robes decorated with a white skull and crossbones. Concealed behind their slitted hoods, this KKK-like network of white-supremacist thugs threw bombs

into union halls, set fire to labor activists’ homes, tortured union organizers and killed at least 50 in Detroit alone. Many of their victims were Blacks lured

North by tales of good auto plant jobs. One of their victims, Rev. Earl Little, was murdered in 1931. His son, later called Malcolm X, was then six. An earlier memory, his first, was a night-time raid in 1929 when the Legion burnt down their house....

“The du Pont Co., and particularly GM, was a major contributor to Nazi military efforts to wipe communism off the map of Europe. In 1929, GM bought Adam Opel, Germany’s largest car manufacturer. In 1974, a Senate Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly heard evidence from researcher Bradford Snell proving that that in 1935, GM opened an Opel factory to supply the Nazi’s with “Blitz” military trucks. In appreciation, for this

help, Adolf Hitler awarded GM’s chief executive for overseas operations, James Mooney, with the Order of the German Eagle (first class). (http://coat.ncf.ca/our_magazine/links/53/dupont.html)

Clearly, while claiming to protect its workers from a “labor dictatorship,” the company had no issues with dictatorship per se.

Point nine of the formula stated: “Close the publicity barrage on the theme that the plant is in full operation and the strikers are merely a minority attempting to interfere with the ‘right to work.’ With this, the campaign is over—the employer has broken the strike”

Like Bush’s failed “liberation” scenario in Iraq, this shallow mathematical formula did not calculate in the workers and oppressed. It omitted their humanity, not counting on their will to resist when conditions become intolerable.

Seeing the red baiting for what it was, looking to leadership that included socialists and communists of every stripe, on February 11, 1937, the workers emerged from the occupied plants triumphant.

Songwriters Lee Hays, Millard Lampell and Pete Seeger expressed these lessons in the 1947 song “Talkin’ Union”:

“That if you don’t let red-baiting break you up, If you don’t let stooliegeons break you up, If you don’t let vigilantes break you up, and if you don’t let race hatred break you up—You’ll win.” □

Peoples’ convention to oppose Democratic Convention

By Workers World Denver bureau

Activists from the Recreate-68 Alliance held a press conference March 26 to announce opposition to the Democratic National Convention, which will be in Denver for four days at the end of August 2008.

The group is looking to organize mass numbers of people to converge on Denver to resist the Democratic Party—a party that masquerades as the peoples’ party, but in reality is the lesser evil of the two major capitalist parties.

At the press conference, the organizers exposed the complicity of the Democratic Party in waging the war against the Iraqi people, the war in Afghanistan and the other conflicts and wars this country has been catapulted into by the puppet parties of the ruling class.

Tom Cincotta of the Colorado branch of the National Lawyers Guild announced that the alliance would resist attempts to silence it or to create the same kind of repressive atmospheres that existed at the DNC in Boston in 2004 and at the Republican National Convention in New York the same year.

Mark Cohen explained the alliance’s name. The group is not calling for violence but for the masses, especially the most oppressed, to voice their opposition. Cohen stated that it was the state that created the violence in 1968; as long as the state allows people free reign to protest, there will be no violence.

Glen Spagnuolo announced that the opposition would constitute a four-day festival. There will be teach-ins, presen-



WW PHOTO
Third and fourth from left, Melissa Kleinman of FIST and Larry Hales of the Denver International Action Center.

tations, marches and protests, as well as entertainment.

Melissa Kleinman of FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—declared that this is not simply about the war in Iraq, but an indictment of the capitalist system and its crony politicians. She laid out the atrocities committed during the Clinton administration as an example of the true aims of the Democrats.

Larry Hales said that the \$50 million given to both parties in federal funds for security for their conventions is a continuation of the war against the poor because it is money that should be spent for peoples’ needs.

Finally, Barbara Cohen stated that locally, \$50 million could keep schools open and provide for healthcare and other needs of people throughout the metropolitan area.

R-68 is asking individuals and organizations to form groups in their communities and campuses and start making plans to join them in Denver. Visit recreate68.org for more information. □

LOS ANGELES

March on ICE for immigrant rights

By John Parker
Los Angeles

Close to a thousand people marched on March 25 to demand an end to raids and deportations sweeping the country, as well as the war on immigrants and Iraq.

The march began at the historic Placita Olvera. After building to larger-than-expected numbers, protestors took over the streets on the way to the Federal Detention Center, where the final rally was held.

The march commemorated the March 25 demonstration in Los Angeles last year of more than 1.5 million people, which effectively halted the anti-immigrant Sensenbrenner Bill (HR4437).

“This year it will be these raids and deportations that drive our communities out into the streets,” said one protestor.

The action was co-sponsored by Hermandad Mexicana and included chapter organizations from Oxnard, San Fernando and Los Angeles. Buses were brought from the various chapters. Gloria Saucedo, one of the key organizers of the march and a coordinator of Hermandad Mexicana, has led and organized many demonstrations in front of the Federal Building in Los Angeles protesting the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE).

Many of the participating organiza-

tions are also part of the National May 1 Movement for Worker and Immigrant Rights, a coalition of labor, clergy, anti-war and immigrant rights organizations. Regarding ICE, a statement by the coalition read: “The dehumanizing behavior of ICE, which even arrests, in handcuffs, 7-year-old children, is a declaration to would-be racists that it is OK to violently target immigrants. Since the start of Homeland Security’s Return to Sender program started in June 2006, over 18,000 people have been arrested. And once arrested, the people face conditions reminiscent of concentration camps, where, as in Texas, adults and children are inhumanely confined for 23 hours at a time with inadequate access to food and health care.”

Organizers likened these raids to the U.S. wars waged on working people around the world. One of the slogans for the demonstration that helped bring out more anti-war activists was “Stop the War on Immigrants! Stop the War on Iraq Now!” Organizers also called for an end to the funding of the war by Congress.

Organizations participating in this demonstration included the March 25 Coalition-Los Angeles, the International Action Center, Fr. Luis Nieto-Resurrection Catholic Church, United Teachers Los Angeles, AFSCME, FOMUUSA, La Casa del Mexicano, the National Lawyers Guild, BAYAN-USA and FMLN-LA. □

Education under U.S. capitalism

By Caleb T. Maupin
Baldwin-Wallace College FIST

The myth that the schools are controlled by leftists is purported daily by the ultra-right. Sneering, loudmouth voices of the powers that be, like Bill O'Reilly and Rush Limbaugh, bombard their audiences with the message that the educational system in the United States is "anti-American" and "liberal dominated."

Nothing could be further from the truth. U.S. schools are tools of the capitalist bosses. They are part of what the great revolutionary Vladimir Lenin called a "machinery of oppression." U.S. schools reflect all the oppression, racism, sexism, homophobia and class division that U.S. capitalism has to offer.

Repression of student dissent

All across the country students who dare express progressive views are suppressed. The Supreme Court recently heard the case of *Morse v. Frederick*. Joseph Frederick is a student at a high school in Alaska who held a sign reading "Bong Hits 4 Jesus." The sign was conceived as a statement opposing the prohibition of marijuana, which puts thousands of people in prison each year.

The principal of his high school immediately ripped the banner down and Frederick was suspended. Frederick wasn't even on school grounds or at a school function. He was on a public sidewalk outside his school expressing his thoughts, one of the rights we are supposed to have in this "democracy."

In January, St. Francis High School in St. Paul, Minn. did not permit the school newspaper to print a picture of a ripped U.S. flag. (AP, Jan. 21) The new code of conduct for New York City public schools allows for students to be punished with up to 90 days suspension for statements they make outside of school, even on the Internet. (Student Press Law Center, Sept. 28, 2006)

In Richland County, Wis., students were forced to attend a pro-Bush rally during the 2004 election. When parents asked if the children had any choice about attending the rally, the school secretary initially told them the students could "stay home." Students were told if they wore anything critical of Bush to the rally, including John Kerry buttons, they risked expulsion. (www.dailycos.com) An elementary

school in Topeka, Kan., banned traditional Halloween costumes in 2001 and required all students to wear costumes with "patriotic themes." (Topeka Capital-Journal, Oct. 24, 2001) Students at San Fernando Valley High in California were not permitted to hang posters for their school play in 2005 because they mocked President Bush. (AP, May 29, 2005)

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed a bill in 2001 requiring students to recite the pledge of allegiance and the national anthem, unless they have a signed letter from their parents. (www.ncac.org)

Homophobia High

The U.S. educational system is clearly a breeding ground for anti-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi and trans) bigotry, which runs rampant on campuses as part of capitalist educational policy. Books with LGBT themes are frequently banned from classrooms. The most banned book of 2005 was "It's Perfectly Normal," a sex education book that deals with homosexuality. (www.st-charles.lib.il.us) In 2006 Davis High School in Yakima, Wash., banned the production of the play "The Laramie Project," which powerfully portrays the murder of gay college student Matthew Shepherd, claiming it "promotes homosexuality." (Yakima Herald-Republic, Oct. 6, 2006)

A student at Troy High School in California was fired as editor of the school paper for writing an article that profiled three gay students and allowed them to speak openly about their sexuality. (Student Press Law Center, Apr. 20, 2006) The California legislature recently passed a law to make anti-LGBT language in school textbooks illegal, but the governor refused to sign it. (Sacramento Bee, Sept. 7, 2006)

Hampton University, one of the "small liberal arts colleges" which are seen as an epicenter for the conspiracy theories of leftist domination, will not allow a campus LGBT organization to form on its campus. (Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, Feb. 22) In 2005, the college actually considered expelling students for passing out literature and hanging flyers that advocated the impeachment of Bush. (Inside Higher Ed, Nov. 20, 2005)

The California Safe Schools Coalition reports that 27.4 percent of California students experience anti-gay harassment at school. (www.youthlaw.org) Forty-six

percent of the students felt that their schools were not safe for LGBT students. (www.aclu-sc.org)

National oppression

Even though the schools play such a good role for the people who run this system, they are still greatly under funded, especially in the oppressed communities. The schools that receive the worst funding, and are therefore in the worst condition, are the schools that are attended by the youth of nationally oppressed communities. The schools of Harlem, of Cleveland, of Los Angeles suffer greatly.

Students in the inner cities go to schools that do not even have enough books or desks, while the schools of the rich are packed with swimming pools, multiple basketball courts, science labs and libraries filled with quality up-to-date research materials. Meanwhile, billions of dollars more are spent on bombs, on machine guns, on missiles and such. Billions more are spent on building prisons to lock away the youth, after they have grown up in a society that doesn't even provide them with a decent education.

Repression

Today's schools are packed with police. Drug searches in which the school is locked down and the hallways are patrolled by canine units, have become commonplace. Courts have upheld the "right" for students to be randomly drug tested. The hope is to strike terror into students, letting them know that at any time they may be accompanied by a school staff member into the restroom and forced to urinate into a cup.

The New York Civil Liberties Union released a report that documented that New York Police Department officers, stationed in the schools, frequently "curse at students," "confiscate students school supplies and lunches," and do not even respect the authority of the school administration. It seems the schoolyard bullies of the past have been replaced by the same forces that brutally killed Sean Bell and Amadou Diallo. The report stated: "If you treat children like criminals, they will fulfill those expectations. The stakes are too high to allow these policies to continue."

Bias in facts

The most important thing that schools can teach students about U.S. history, the glorious history of class struggle, has been cut out of the curriculum. The book "Lies My Teacher Told Me" documents how

topics as important as the anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s and the militant anti-racist movements are unknown to many students.

When students learn of the Vietnam War, they do not see images of the charred bodies of Vietnamese children or the streets filled with militant youth ready to bring it to a halt. When students learn of the civil rights movement, they do not see the images of civil rights marchers being clubbed or run down by fire hoses, and they do not learn of how the FBI coerced Martin Luther King and urged him to commit suicide. When students learn of organized labor, they do not learn of the workers taking over their plants; they do not learn of the great Teamsters strike, the Haymarket rebellion, or of the positive role that socialists and communists played in organizing the people for a better world—not just in labor, but in all fields of social progress.

Frequently military recruiters are invited into social studies and history classes to give students lectures about political issues, indoctrinate the students with the military party-line, and encourage students to donate their bodies to imperialist wars of plunder.

What the schools are

The schools, under the capitalist system, function as a tool of the capitalist rulers. They educate students to be good workers who labor on behalf of the bosses. Students are repressed and taught not to raise their heads. LGBT students, as well as students from oppressed nationalities, face institutionalized bullying and repression. Armed police patrol the halls harassing students. School textbooks teach students a fraudulent history of this country, which ignores the ugliness of capitalism and the heroism of everyday working people. Many schools are not even adequately funded, while the government spends billions to rain death on the peoples of Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan with bloody occupations.

But imagine what schools could be in a different society. Imagine schools that are not run by corrupt bureaucrats who are owned by capitalist politicians and serve their system. Imagine the schools that would exist in a workers state—a society where the working people are in power, and fighting to make life better for everyone, not trying to maximize the profits of a few.

This is to imagine a new socialist world. □

Students walk out from coast to coast

Continued from page 1

as an overwhelming success. Many of the students who participated said that this action was their first against the war, and that it would certainly not be their last.

Raleigh, N.C.

Organizing for the Raleigh walkout only began recently on the bus ride home from the March on the Pentagon on March 17. Nevertheless, more than 100 students from N.C. State University and three Raleigh high schools—Enloe High, Southeast High and Cardinal-Gibbons Catholic High—walked out of class and gathered at an event organized by Raleigh FIST at N.C. State University's bell tower on March 20.

More than half of the participating students were from the local high schools. They took a truly militant and courageous

stand against U.S. imperialism, a stand that has led to several of them suffering harsh disciplinary consequences from school administrators and parents. Many of these students had previously tried to organize and express their frustrations with the ongoing war in Iraq, with little to no outlet. For most, this was their first anti-war demonstration.

The high school students were the first to make a presence at the rally. Students from N.C. State began to join in, starting a picket on the sidewalk lining Hillsborough Street, a major thoroughfare in downtown Raleigh. University police then demanded that the students disperse. Overwhelmed by the number of students and their vigilance, the police were ignored and students continued their chanting and picketing.

The students marched down the sidewalk towards the main campus. As they passed classrooms, their chants could be

heard inside by students and teachers. A university assistant professor, Jordan Hester, told FIST organizers: "My students stopped and watched as you all marched past. Our lecture subject quickly shifted to a discussion about the war." High-level university bureaucrats and plain-clothes agents attempted to intervene, calling on FIST organizers to stop the chants. Again, fostered by the unity and strength of the students, the chants continued as the march wandered through campus.

Once the students approached the main open area of the university, hundreds of on-looking students gathered as the marchers began chanting, "What do we want? Revolution! When do we want it? Now! And if we don't get it? Shut it down!" The march continued through the "free expression" tunnel where students rallied and spoke out against the racist war.

Speakers at the rally included mem-

bers of Raleigh FIST; a visiting youth who was preparing for 60 days in federal prison for being arrested at the School of the Americas protest at Ft. Benning, Ga.; Larkin Coffey, the main student organizer from Enloe High; and Miles Holst, a representative from the newly formed N.C. State SDS chapter. Many of the speakers focused on the racist and class implications of the war, emphasizing the class solidarity necessary to overcome the U.S. war machine. Students left feeling high with revolutionary fervor.

The nationwide student walkouts truly were an expression of student power. Students, united with working people and organized with an internationalist perspective, are taking bold and loud steps to build a movement that is exposing the contradictions of the capitalist system—steps that will inevitably lead to the end of U.S. imperialism. □

Milwaukee 21 part of international resistance against U.S. imperialism

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

In a courageous act of resistance, youth and students from across the metro Milwaukee area took to the streets and confronted an Army recruiting station two blocks from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee on March 19—the eve of the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion, occupation and criminal war on Iraq.

During the course of their demonstration a window happened to get broken, so cops issued municipal citations for “disorderly conduct” to 21 youth, and then told sensationalist fabrications to the corporate media of what was actually taking place.

The cops and media are still working in concert to portray the actions as those of “juvenile vandals,” thereby attempting to issue a chilling effect upon protest. Like some in the anti-war movement, they violence-baited the youth as well. But it’s clear that the youth were not violent and were consciously engaging in political acts of resistance against a key component of U.S. imperialism: the Army.

Despite the attacks, many across the U.S. came to the youths’ aid.

Support the Milwaukee 21!

Within hours, letters to the editor came pouring in at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, the biggest corporate newspaper in the state, as did statements of organizational support. The letters and statements steadfastly protested the negative and incorrect depictions of these youth and the publishing of all the names of the 21 in the newspaper.

In a March 21 letter to the Journal Sentinel, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice wrote, “We urge the Wisconsin anti-war movement to stand united behind the arrested young people and to call for any and all charges to be dropped immediately, instead of demonizing them for their bold tactics which, as the media even admits, caused ‘no injuries.’ ... Stop the U.S. war on Iraq by any means necessary! Stop the war at home!”

John Catalinotto, an organizer with the American Servicemen’s Union from 1967 to 1971, wrote to the paper, “Like it or not, it was the threat of disintegration of the military, along with the loss of the youths’ support at home, that did more to contrib-

ute to Nixon’s decision to ‘Vietnamize’ the war than any of the peaceful gatherings or the blatherings of Congress. The Journal fears that a similar situation could occur today. Those of us serious about ending this catastrophe in the Middle East say, to paraphrase one of the president’s more ridiculous statements, ‘Bring it on.’”

Many youth and students nationwide support their sisters and brothers under siege in Milwaukee.

A March 23 statement reads: “The national youth group FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—unconditionally expresses our solidarity with the 21 youth arrested for protesting the war in Wisconsin. The U.S. imperialist government is carrying out two major wars: the illegal wars abroad, exemplified by the continued illegal occupation against the people of Iraq, and the war against people living in the United States, which includes the slashing of jobs and money for education and social services.”

The statement continues: “Military recruiting targets those most affected by the war at home—poor youth and youth of color—to be sent off to fight in wars throughout the world with the far-fetched hope that they will return without severe injuries and with prospects for ‘a better life’ through education and training. ... We demand that the charges against all 21 youth be dropped immediately, and urge the anti-war movement in Wisconsin and beyond to stand in support of these activists. The attack on these youth is a clear attempt to silence dissent, and it is necessary that we be bold and unwavering in our support of them.”

From a International Action Center Denver statement: “The recruiting office is two blocks from a campus with nearly 30,000 students, many of them working class, from a state where 70 of its youth have died in Iraq—ranging from 18 to 32 years of age. ... The U.S. imperialist government and the corporations and the

super rich it does its bidding for are the real purveyors of violence.”

On March 23 the International Action Center Milwaukee issued a statement, which read in part: “To equate the U.S. government violence at home and its violence/genocide in Iraq to a broken window is sheer hypocrisy. There can never be an equal sign between the violence of the oppressor and the self-defense of the oppressed. Are not these youth engaging in the self-defense of their generation similar to the Iraqi resistance?”

The nationwide letters and statements were noticed and appreciated.

On the Milwaukee Indymedia website, “ARA kid” wrote about the IAC-Milwaukee statement: “This group knows what the word solidarity means. ... This group seems to realize that to win this fight we have to have each others’ backs.”

Another youth wrote to the IAC-Milwaukee and FIST: “I wanted to thank you for your statements of support. Those arrested have felt the amazing solidarity that comes from being part of a broad and diverse movement.”

Shut the war down!

Presently the Milwaukee 21 and their allies are discussing ways to fight back. They are not alone in their personal fight against the injustice inflicted on them or their decision to resist. From Tacoma to Pittsburgh to the “Encampment to Stop the War” March 12-19 in Washington, D.C., the die is cast. The tide is turning. Direct active resistance to criminal, racist U.S. imperialism in Iraq and worldwide is the order of the day.

As the FIST statement declares: “When the will of the people of the United States—expressed in countless protests as well as the election last November—is consistently ignored by both Republican and Democratic parties, it is time to move from protest to resistance. The anti-war movement can and should use a variety of tactics. Our resistance will only increase until these wars are ended.”

Bryan G. Pfeifer is an International Action Center-Milwaukee organizer.



Youth demand respect for elder

On March 23 militant African-American youth silenced the lunchtime cash register at Epicurus Place. On Feb. 28, respected community elder and artist Aaron Ibn Pori Pitts was assaulted by an employee of this restaurant near Wayne State University in Detroit. Demonstrators are demanding a verbal apology to Ibn by the owners of the restaurant, a written apology, a televised public apology and training for the owners and staff so they can serve the community with respect and sensitivity.

According to the Pan African News Wire blog (<http://panafricannews.blogspot.com/>), “For the past two weeks, a few of Ibn’s supporters have protested daily, urging people of conscience to boycott the restaurant. Ibn has filed a criminal complaint, which is currently in the hands of the Wayne County prosecutor. He has also initiated steps to file a civil lawsuit.

Detroit City Council members Kwame



Kenyatta and JoAnn Watson and Wayne County Commission Chair Jewel Ware have expressed their support for Pitts in his struggle for justice.

Ibn is 65-year-old artist who was recently honored as the Artist of the Year by the Metro Times Newspaper. He is a longtime activist, having been a member of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the National Conference of Artists and numerous other organizations. He is a member of the Council of Elders of the African Community of Detroit. Pitts has traveled to the Canary Islands, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Mali and Ghana.”

The boycott and demonstrations will continue until the community’s demands are met.

—Report and photos by Cheryl LaBash

While blaming Tehran

Massive U.S. war exercises threaten Iran

By Deirdre Griswold

On March 27, the Associated Press reported that the U.S. had launched its largest naval exercises in the Persian Gulf since the invasion of Iraq.

Two immense aircraft carriers, the USS Eisenhower and the USS Stennis, were steaming off the coast of Iran, each one accompanied by a carrier strike group of vessels and planes. All together, more than 100 planes were involved in this obvious attempt to intimidate the Iranian people with a show of military might.

The magnitude of the operation was sketched by the AP: "Each carrier hosts an air wing of F/A-18 Hornet and Super-hornet fighter-bombers, EA-6B Prowler electronic warfare aircraft, S-3 Viking anti-submarine and refuelers, and E-2C Hawkeye airborne command-and-control craft. Also taking part were guided-missile destroyers USS Anzio, USS Ramage, USS O'Kane, USS Mason, USS Preble and USS Nitze; and minesweepers USS Scout, USS Gladiator and USS Ardent."

The Eisenhower had moved to the Gulf from the coast of Somalia, where in December it provided cover for an invasion of that country by thousands of Ethiopian troops, coordinated by U.S. special forces. Washington's objective was to break the political power of the popular Islamic Courts Union and firm up a "transitional government" of discredited "warlords" who had lost control of the

country. As usual, the public relations flacks in Washington explained this outright aggression with one pat phrase: the "war on terror."

British sailors, marines detained

Iran must have known that the current exercises were about to take place when on March 23 its navy stopped a vessel in the Shatt al-Arab waterway between Iraq and Iran and detained 15 British sailors and marines.

There are two accounts of why this happened. The U.S.-British account is that the British sailors were in Iraqi waters inspecting civilian ships suspected of smuggling and that the Iranians had no right to detain them.

The Iranian account is that the British had entered Iranian waters. It says the 15 detained sailors and marines have not been harmed but are being questioned to determine whether their violation of Iran's sea boundaries was "intentional or unintentional."

Meanwhile, the media in both Britain and the U.S. are pumping up an international crisis over the seizure of the 15. If they report at all on the huge war exercises going on, it is to give the impression that the U.S. is just responding to the "evil bully," Iran.

How low can the monopolized corporate media go—especially the television "news" programs aimed at a mass audience? Lower than a snake's belly.

They won't ask the most elementary questions about this preposterous story, even though the whole world knows by now that the residents of both the White House and Downing Street are a pack of liars.

However, independent-minded people in the West should be able to figure this all out. There is plenty of historical precedent to understand what is going on.

First of all, it makes no sense that Iran would deliberately enter Iraqi waters and seize British naval personnel just as U.S. carriers were bearing down on its coast to carry out war maneuvers. The Iranians know very well that the U.S. is the world's superpower when it comes to military might and would not help it create a pretext for aggression.

Second, the U.S. and Britain have long been in a partnership to dominate the oil-rich Middle East; it should be remembered that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. once controlled most of Iran's oil. It DOES make sense that they would concoct a provocation just before the U.S. war maneuvers began.

Third, isn't it suspicious that the charge against Iran came from London and Washington, not from Baghdad? Didn't this allegedly happen in Iraqi waters?

Fourth, even though several accounts have appeared in the Western media—including in the series on U.S. military threats against Iran by Seymour Hersh in the *New Yorker* magazine—about U.S. special forces operating clandestinely inside Iran, promoting secessionist groups and gathering intelligence, the Iranian government has so far taken no action that might inflame its already tense relationship with Washington.

Finally, the penetration of a country's territorial waters by U.S. warships or spying vessels has happened before.

Gulf of Tonkin, USS Pueblo

In August 1964, Congress passed a resolution that was later cited by President Lyndon Johnson as his authority to escalate the war in Vietnam. The so-called Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was based on a supposed "attack" by North Vietnamese patrol boats on U.S. warships in international waters. Later, with the publication of the *Pentagon Papers*, this pretext for the war was shown to be totally false.

In January 1968, the ship USS Pueblo and its crew of 83 men were captured by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea after entering the DPRK's waters. The U.S. claimed the ship was on an innocent mission—until its captain apologized to the Koreans and admitted publicly that it had been intercepting the Koreans' electronic communications.

No one outside the U.S./British high command knows where the present crisis is leading. It must not be allowed to become the excuse for an escalation of the imperialist military intervention in the Middle East, which has already brought so much misery and destruction to the region and to the soldiers coerced and tricked into going there. □

U.S. effort to 'pacify' Somalia meets resistance

By G. Dunkel

Some 100 to 200 U.S. Army Special Forces are currently operating in Somalia. While not generally reported, the *New York Times* on both March 22 and March 23 did mention this fact. The *Independent*, a major bourgeois British paper, reported March 6 that special forces from both Britain and the U.S. were operating in Somalia.

They are meeting armed resistance from the Somali people.

Some analysts, like Ignatius Ramonet in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, a social democratic monthly in France, claim the U.S. has opened up a third theater in its "war on terror," which is really a war to dominate the Middle East. Iraq and Afghanistan are the other two theaters. Somalia is right across the Gulf of Aden from the Arabian Peninsula and every ship headed through the Suez Canal must pass close by.

U.S. Army Special Forces intervened in Somalia at least once before, in 1992. After a major defeat in 1993, when U.S. helicop-

ters strafed the capital but were downed by small arms fire—memorialized in the movie and book "Black Hawk Down"—the U.S. and the U.N. withdrew their forces. However, the CIA continued to supply some Somali agents and operatives with money, weapons and intelligence.

The country did not have an effective central government from the late 1980s to 2005.

The Islamic Courts Union started growing strong in 2004, especially in the capital city of Mogadishu, where constant fighting was making economic activity difficult. By June of 2006, however, after the ICU had established its authority, Mogadishu was so stable that families could even go to the beach, something that had been impossible for 15 years. (Toronto Star, March 22)

The U.S. government, however, considered the ICU an ally of al Qaeda and an obstacle to Anglo-U.S. domination of the region. Washington enticed the regime in neighboring Ethiopia, using significant financial and political support, to cooperate with some of its "assets" in

Somalia operating under the name of the Transitional Government. Thousands of Ethiopian troops, backed by imperialist special forces and U.S. Navy ships, invaded Somalia and the ICU was swept from power by the end of 2006.

The ICU tried to mount a resistance in southern Somalia, near Kenya, but the special forces called in air strikes from a U.S. carrier group off the Somali coast and dislodged the ICU from its bases.

Kenyan authorities rounded up Somali refugees who fled the fighting and the U.S. set up a program of "extraordinary renditions," with at least four flights taking captives to Mogadishu and then on to Ethiopia. (Independent, March 6)

While the ICU couldn't hold on in southern Somalia, anger was growing in Mogadishu and other Somali cities. When Ethiopian and Somali troops from the U.S.-backed "transitional government" tried to stage a raid March 21 on a Mogadishu neighborhood opposed to the present regime, they were met with heavy weapons and a sustained fire fight. Some

15 raiders were killed and members of the community burned their bodies, dragged them through the streets and walked on them. A significant number were also wounded.

The next day a Byelorussian plane—carrying supplies to 1,000 Ugandan troops occupying Mogadishu as African Union "peacekeepers"—was shot down by a missile fired from an opposition neighborhood.

Even in a country poorer and more disunited than Afghanistan, the U.S. government and its agents can't stop the resistance to foreign occupation. The U.S. ruling class wants to send more U.S. troops to Somalia, which is reported to have significant off-shore oil reserves, but it can't even find enough for its beleaguered campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. □

Colombian round in

By Betsey Piette
Washington

By Leslie Feinberg

Aswat—which translates from Arabic into English as "voices"—is holding its first conference on March 28 in Haifa, which is within the borders of the 1948 establishment of the colonial garrison state of Israel. Aswat describes itself in English as "Palestinian gay women" and as a group of lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersexual and queer people. The conference is entitled "Home and Exile in Queer Experience." The event will celebrate what Aswat describes as "five fruitful years of engaging in social change

and raising awareness in the Palestinian Community."

Aswat will also proudly launch the historic publication of its first book in Arabic, entitled "Home and Exile in Queer Experience: Collection of Articles about Lesbian and Homosexual Identity."

The all-day conference will include panels, including one on "homosexuality and lesbianism in the Arab community," and solidarity messages from international supporters. The Palestinian women's rap group Arapiat will perform. Aswat has also prepared a slide show.

For more information, write to: ipco-ordinator@aswatgroup.org; call: +972-4-866-2357; fax +972-4-864-1072; or visit www.aswatgroup.org.

Editor's note: Aswat invited Feinberg to speak at the conference. More information about the conference and other aspects of this trip will be featured on the Workers World newspaper Web site at www.workers.org and in the print edition of WW. Installments of Feinberg's WW "Lavender & Red" series will continue when she returns. Read the entire series posted at workers.org.

The U.S. government's attempt to railroad Colombian political prisoner Ricardo Palmera, alias Simón Trinidad, suffered another significant setback March 26 when chief judge of the District Court for Washington, D.C., Thomas F. Hogan, was forced to recuse himself from the case after a motion filed by defense attorney Robert Tucker exposed a conspiracy between Hogan and the prosecutors.

The recusal, on what was scheduled to be the opening day of a new trial, came after it was revealed that Judge Hogan had had ex parte dealings with the prosecutors in the case. In November 2006, the U.S. government's case against Trinidad

ARGENTINA

Massive marches demand 1976 militarists be punished

By John Catalinotto
Buenos Aires, Argentina

With drums and firecrackers sounding off, tens of thousands of Argentines of all ages marched noisily through the broad boulevards in the downtown center of the capital to the Plaza de Mayo on March 24. Thousands more marched or met in dozens of provincial cities. They marked the 31st anniversary of the 1976 U.S.-backed military coup, demanding legal punishment for those involved in the military government from 1976 to 1983 and the "appearance, alive" of Julio López, who was kidnapped six months ago after testifying against one of that era's murdering police chiefs.

Twelve million of Argentina's 37 million people live in the greater Buenos Aires region, giving the capital enormous political weight in this large country about one-third the size of Brazil. But an equally important demonstration on the same issue was held in Córdoba, some 450

miles away. There the president, Nestor Kirchner, spoke at a rally at La Perla, a military prison the junta government used as a concentration camp during the time it "disappeared"—that is, arrested and secretly murdered—30,000 Argentine political activists and union organizers from left and Peronist groups (political parties that have their historical roots in the 1940s and 1950s when Juan Perón was president of Argentina. Perón



was a bourgeois nationalist and populist whose neutrality in World War II was condemned by the Allied imperialists).

Much of the Argentine left is critical of Kirchner, especially his economic policies and his decision to send Argentine troops to participate in the occupation of Haiti. Nevertheless, both pro-government and left-opposition parties joined to raise the main demands along with dozens of neighborhood and human rights organizations, the most prominent being the Mothers (and now Grandmothers) of the Plaza de Mayo. This group, led by Hebe de Bonafini, has been demonstrating every Thursday for decades to keep the memory of their children alive and to find out exactly what happened to them.

Kirchner himself criticized Argentina's judicial system for moving too slowly to bring court cases against the 259 military and police figures charged with crimes stemming from that period—only a handful have actually been tried.

Some of the more revolutionary organizations—for example the Party of Liberation (PL)—have pointed out that it was not just the accused 259 military and police who were guilty of the crimes of the military government or who profited from them. Many of the major business and banking institutions, especially those connected with imperialist enterprises, are equally responsible for the success of the military in staying in power.

The next day more people demonstrated at the Campo de Mayo in the Buenos Aires region. This center was used to deliver the babies of the disappeared prisoners. Many of these children were adopted and raised by families of the pro-fascist officers and police who murdered their birth mothers.

The 1976-1983 military regime

In the middle of a period of many social struggles in the mid-1970s—near the time of the U.S.-backed, pro-fascist military coup in neighboring Chile in September 1973—elements in the Argentine government, and especially in the military and police, set up extra-legal organizations that today would be labeled "death squads." These groups carried out the kidnappings and murders of leftists. Some of the left groups fought back.

With the complete support of the U.S. government and its Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, a group of generals and police seized power in Argentina. This group then carried out a wholesale roundup not only of the urban guerrilla leftists in Argentina but also of political activists and union organizers from across the leftist and Peronist political spectrum. Prisoners were held secretly, tortured, and some 30,000 were murdered.

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Because of the role of U.S. imperialism in backing the generals, the March 24 protests had an anti-imperialist content, and there were even some slogans attacking President George Bush for the Iraq war and his policy toward South America.

In the 1970s U.S. imperialism justified its intervention in support of the generals in Chile and Argentina, as well as its support of obvious dictators in Haiti, Philippines, Indonesia and Zaire (now Congo) as part of its anti-communist crusade. Today the U.S. government tries to use human-rights rhetoric to justify intervention. In neither case is imperialist intervention in a country a solution for the people there.

The disappearance of the 30,000 mostly young Argentines has been a major issue in Argentine life. Even in the past year, at least three Argentine films have dealt with this theme. One, "Sisters," shows the relations between two sisters, one of whose compañeros was disappeared. Another shows a child raised by an officer's family who is then returned to her birth parents' family. A third, a documentary called "M," was made by the two children of a disappeared mother, who reconstruct her life and events through interviews with people who knew her.

Even small revolutionary groups will have a list of comrades who were kidnapped and killed during that period. For politically active Argentines, the 30,000 disappeared are definitely "presente."

This year the issue is even more dramatic because of the disappearance of López, who had also been kidnapped in the 1970s. He had testified last November at the trial of former Police Chief Miguel Etchecolatz, who was charged and convicted of genocide. The assumption is that López was kidnapped and perhaps killed. The demonstrators also want the other military criminals to be punished.

This April 2 is the 25th anniversary of the war between Argentina—under the military government—and British imperialism over the Malvinas Islands, which are islands that were home to settlers from the British Isles and constituted an outpost of the British Empire in South America. A further article will discuss this anniversary.

Peace encampment set up in defense

U.S. capital threatens Cucapa community

By Mary Tamburro

The Cucapa people have lived on the land adjacent to the Colorado River in the communities of El Mayor and El Zanjón for over 9,000 years, living off the fish they catch there.

In 1993 the government of Mexico passed a law creating an ecological reserve out of this land and making it illegal for the Cucapa people to fish for their livelihood. Recently the Mexican government moved in federal troops to enforce this law.

The reserve was created to protect the sensitive species of marine life that travel through this area of the river, but the reason these species are dying out has nothing to do with the Cucapa.

Capitalist ventures north of the U.S./Mexico border are sucking the river dry and threatening this people's existence. Much of the water of the Colorado River is diverted to Los Angeles and Las Vegas, leaving this Indigenous community without a way to survive.

With only about 300 Cucapa still living, and their source of life becoming off



limits to them, "The Other Campaign" has stepped in to ask for binational support for the people of this area who have been the ecological ambassadors of this river for generations.

A peace encampment has been established on the land to escort the Cucapa on their fishing excursions to ensure that they are able to get what they need to survive, which is all they take.

The Other Campaign has called the encampment to extend the length of the fishing season, from Feb. 28 to May 3.

This Indigenous community needs support in the form of non-perishable food and clothing items and other material, and they need people to help witness and ensure that the Cucapa can continue to fish and feed themselves.

To make a donation or to attend the camp, please contact the Collectivo Zapatista San Diego at colectivozapatista@riseup.net or 619-819-7806, or visit [www.nomadicsoundsystem.com/cucapa/](http://nomadicsoundsystem.com/cucapa/).

The author is an organizer for FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—in San Diego.

prisoner wins second U.S. courts

ended in a mistrial when jurors could not reach a unanimous verdict. Hogan, who presided over that trial, subsequently approved a sealed (secret) motion granting prosecutors permission to interview jurors regarding their reasons for not convicting Trinidad.

Under laws governing the District of Columbia court system, if one party in a case communicates with a judge, the other side has a right to know about it and to present their side at the same time. During a pretrial hearing on March 19, while he was accusing the defense of trying to "politicize" the case, lead prosecutor Kenneth Kohl let slip his interview with the foreman from the first jury. This brought to light the attempt to conceal the interview from the defense. It meant

that the judge and prosecutors were illegally working together behind the back of Trinidad's defense attorneys.

That Hogan was actively assisting the prosecution came as no surprise. From day one of Trinidad's first trial, Hogan showed open bias for the prosecution, giving the impression that he was presiding over a trial that could have only one outcome—condemnation of Trinidad.

The prisoner had served as a peace negotiator for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Trinidad had been kidnapped on the streets of Quito, Ecuador and then extradited from Colombia to the U.S., where he was being tried under U.S. domestic law, including the U.S. Patriot Act, for participating in

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Lessons of the vote

On March 22, the House of Representatives passed a \$124 billion war funding bill that, among other things, calls for U.S. troops to be withdrawn from Iraq by Aug. 31, 2008. The "anti-war" Democratic-led Out of Iraq Caucus had met behind closed doors with newly-elected House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who told them that she wanted at least four of them to vote for the bill; in all 10 members of the caucus voted for it. The final vote was a close one—218 to 212.

Why did this meeting have to take place behind closed doors? Because the liberal Democrats were told that if they defeated this bill, it would undermine the leadership of Pelosi and the rest of the Democratic Party, strategists and leaders. It would be tantamount to a humiliating defeat for them in the eyes of the Republicans.

In the end, the Out of Iraq Caucus chose to ignore the election outcome that took place this past Nov. 7, where the people voted overwhelmingly against the Iraq war and to bring the troops home immediately.

Overall, the significance of this bill reflects the general orientation of the war. The most dominant factions within both capitalist parties agree that the war is a losing effort and that there is a no-win situation for U.S. imperialism. Yet even with the knowledge that the U.S. military position in Iraq has become increasingly compromised as the resistance grows stronger, these factions still want to grasp at any strategy to try to help the U.S. save face worldwide.

This legislative bill gives the Pentagon the green light to try to salvage a losing effort by making the withdrawal deadline more than a year away. This satisfies all of the bourgeois currents on both sides in many ways—except

for Bush, who is against any kind of timeline for withdrawing U.S. troops.

The bottom line is that the Democratic leadership is not against wars of aggression. They have made it known, for instance, that they would much rather see the U.S. shift more troops to Afghanistan from Iraq. In addition, a provision was removed from the bill stating that if Bush called for a military attack against Iran, Congress would have to approve it first. This bill is now free of any legal obstacles to a U.S. attack on Iran.

The Democratic leadership and strategists are concerned about capturing the White House and the reins of the capitalist state, not about the well-being of the Iraqis or the U.S. soldiers. They are, in essence, attempting to use the anti-war sentiment of the masses to recapture the presidency in 2008 and control the budget.

They can talk leftist politics, but when it comes down to crunch time—when the imperialists put the pressure on for the vote to continue their slaughter of the workers and oppressed people—all anti-war speeches are nullified. All of a sudden, the left lines up with the center, and the center is lined up with the imperialists. This is what bourgeois politics are all about.

This is another important lesson as to why the masses must break from the Democratic and Republican parties to take an independent road to the struggle. The March 12-18 encampment organized by the Troops Out Now Coalition was a bold attempt not only to mount a campaign "from protest to resistance" against the war funding around the fourth anniversary of the war, but also to expose the role of the Democrats—who have the blood of the Iraqi people and U.S. soldiers on their hands just as much as the Republicans do. □

From Yugoslavia to Iraq to Sudan

Eight years ago on March 24, 1999, the U.S. began bombing the city of Pristina in Kosovo, the opening of the 79-day war on Yugoslavia.

The brutality of the U.S. bombers is intentionally forgotten by the big U.S. media. U.S. bombs and rockets targeted civilians, hitting passenger trains, destroying the chemical industry, and poisoning the Danube River. Schools were bombed as were hospitals as well as television broadcast centers during live newscasts. As has been documented since that time, U.S. generals told the Yugoslav leaders that unless they surrendered, the capital city of Belgrade would be carpet-bombed so heavily that nothing would be left standing.

Now, eight years later, this war is not being described as the crime it was.

Like the U.S. war on Iraq, the war on Yugoslavia was based on lies. The lies were told by President Bill Clinton, his cabinet members and his generals.

The big lie was that the war was necessary to "stop genocide," even though there was no genocide to stop.

Genocide has a legal definition under international law, and the U.S. imperialists claimed that gave them legal justification for their war on Yugoslavia. Genocide in that case means the massive, systematic killing of an "ethnic, racial or religious group" by a state power.

The U.S. sanctions on Iraq before the war that killed more than a million Iraqis probably qualifies under this definition as genocide. The U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq has involved the massive killing of Iraqis.

But in a ruling that also comes eight years after the war, the International Court of Justice—though packed with U.S.-friendly judges—could find no basis for charging the

Yugoslav government or the Serbian government with genocide. The headlines, put into the back pages of the newspapers and mostly ignored on the TV news, said: "Serbia not guilty of genocide."

The ruling did not say there were no deaths, that there was no brutality. It says that there was no genocide being carried out by the Yugoslav government, which was the basis that Clinton and the Pentagon launched the 1999 war.

The significance of this should not be lost. Just as there were no "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq, there was no genocide in Yugoslavia. But the Clinton administration was threatening war unless Yugoslavia surrendered to a U.S. takeover. The reports of genocide were intentionally whipped up in order to create a justification for the war. This is the same formula the Bush administration used for its war on Iraq.

Similar formulas have been used to justify other imperialist wars. And will be used again in the future unless the imperialists are stopped.

Already claims of "genocide" in Darfur are being used to whip up calls for imperialist military intervention in Sudan. The well-financed "Save Darfur Coalition" is advancing this agenda. But for whom?

To know what is happening in Darfur it is necessary to look at the history of British imperialism and U.S. intervention in the region as well as Sudan's rich oil resources. It is not an accident that the calls for imperialist military intervention would put the U.S. in control of the oil region of Sudan.

Whenever the imperialists start pointing the finger elsewhere and shouting "genocide," that's when you know that they have a secret agenda. And it has nothing to do with anything humanitarian. □

BAYAN USA solidarity with Philippine tribunal

The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal's (PPT) second session on the Philippines that will hear testimonies and render judgment on the indictment of Philippines' President Gloria M. Arroyo and U.S. President George W. Bush over charges of human rights violations opened on March 21 in The Hague, Netherlands. The five-day session is being held at the Christus Triumfatorkerk and later at Pax Christikerk in this city.

Arroyo and Bush Jr. are facing charges ranging from systematic violations of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights to violations of national self-determination and liberation committed against the Filipino people. Bush, in particular, has been indicted for his role in renewed military intervention and for supporting President Arroyo's brutal counter-insurgency program in the guise of counter-terrorism.

The first day of the session was devoted to cases of extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances and torture. The following is the March 20 statement of solidarity submitted by BAYAN USA to the tribunal. Go to www.philippintribunal.org for information.

Over 12 Filipino organizations and their broad allied networks in the United States, under the banner of BAYAN USA, are with the families and other witnesses present at the Permanent Peoples Tribunal 2nd Session on the Philippines as they begin the proceedings with definitive charges against the corrupt, rotten and murderous U.S.-Arroyo regime.

We stand by the convening organizations, especially as an overseas chapter of BAYAN, within whose ranks lie a considerable percentage of victims of state-sown terror under the command responsibility of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

As progressive Filipinos in the United States, we are maximizing BAYAN's role as a leader and initiator of a broad, international united front versus an unelected, unpopular and terrorist Philippine government. Prior to this International Tribunal, and most certainly past it, BAYAN USA sees itself not as separate, but integral to the Filipino people's cry and movement of justice, peace, freedom and democracy. Therefore it is our duty to extend the mass movement of Filipinos for peace and justice here on the international front. An attack on one of our compatriots at the hands of Macapagal-Arroyo is an attack on all of us.

It is therefore with anxious spirits that we seek the complete and total

conviction and rightful persecution of the Arroyo and George W. Bush regimes, for their crimes committed against the Filipino people and all of humanity, through the workings of this international public opinion tribunal known around the world.

Let it be known that even this simple act of trial and conviction will never bring back the scores of mothers, fathers, sons and daughters their state terrorism measures have taken away forever. No man-made punishment will ever be enough. For the victims who survive their loved ones lost, we cry with you from across the Pacific Ocean, and seek total and complete justice alongside you.

From our end, we will also continue to pressure the U.S. government to defund the murderous Philippine military that has taken so many of our compatriots' lives away. We resolve never to end building our mass movement and united front against the terror of the Arroyo regime until the Arroyo regime is completely yanked from power and justice is served towards her.

Thank you to the convening and participating groups and individuals for this much-anticipated second session on the Philippines, and thank you to the members of the Permanent Peoples Tribunal itself, for utilizing this forum and prestigious institution to expose what needs to be exposed to the international community—that the Filipino people are dying at the hands of their own government.

We trust you understand the work that needs to be done in service of genuine and lasting peace for our people. We also appeal to you to invoke the reason and understanding this institution raised when it convicted the U.S.-Marcos regime during the first Permanent Peoples Tribunal session on the Philippines back in 1980. Be aware you are now in the midst of a greater enemy to the Filipino people and to the principle of human rights itself.

But most of all may this international tribunal also reveal to the whole world the historical reality that the Filipino people's movement for justice and peace will never be bogged down by the work of any tyrant. In the end, the Filipino people themselves will judge Arroyo in the one court that matters the most—the streets. And this Arroyo must fear and be prepared for.

Stop the killings in the Philippines! Down with the U.S.-Arroyo regime! Justice for the victims of human rights violations!

Free Satur Ocampo!
Free Crispin Beltran!
Long live international solidarity!

APRIL 14

Memorial for Henri Nereaux

The life and contributions to the workers' cause of Henri Nereaux—merchant seafarer, union militant, internationalist and member of Workers World Party—will be honored Sat., April 14, at the Solidarity Center in New York. (See WW article on his life at www.workers.org/2007/us/henri-nereaux-0329/.) The event, at 55 West 17th St., 5th fl., will start at 6 p.m. Light refreshments will be available at 5:30.

To end rape culture

By Tyneisha Bowens
Raleigh, N.C.

On March 13, 2006, a woman of color who is a mother, veteran, honor student and sex worker was raped and sodomized in Durham, N.C. The survivor was assaulted at a party thrown by members of the Duke University lacrosse team. She and another entertainer were hired to dance at the party and instead were subjected to sexual assault and racial slurs.

She reported the assault shortly after the incident. Instead of being believed and supported, this survivor was faced with accusations, blame and disbelief, like so many survivors before her. Communities

were shaken by the event and the responses that followed. Frustrations built and the country was divided over details of the assault instead of being united to combat rape culture as a whole. Many of the accused perpetrators, who are white males, have since been welcomed back to Duke University and the lacrosse team. Some these men are seen as victims of false accusations and slander, taking the focus off of the survivor and the assault itself.

A little more than a year after the infamous Duke lacrosse rape case, a coalition of eight organizations in North Carolina are working together to create a world free from sexual violence and all other

forms of oppression.

A march, entitled "Creating a World Without Sexual Violence, National Day of Truthtelling," is to take place in Durham, N.C., on April 28. The organizations responsible for this day of action are Raleigh FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), UBUNTU, Men Against Rape Culture, SpiritHouse, Southerners On New Ground, Independent Voices, Black Workers For Justice and the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

Messages of the day include "We Believe Survivors" and "End Rape Culture". The coalition leading this effort to end rape culture is led mostly by survivors, women of color and individuals who are or once

were in the sex work industry. This dynamic is to address how one cannot battle sexual violence without understanding the influence of racism, sexism, imperialism and capitalism on rape culture.

Organize within your community to join this effort to bring rape culture to an end on April 28 in Durham, N.C. For more information, including how to endorse this event, visit dayoftruthtelling.wordpress.com or email the coalition at dayoftruthtelling@gmail.com

The writer is a member of the Raleigh FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—youth group.



Chavez in Haiti

By G. Dunkel

Haiti is still under U.N. military occupation, with U.N. forces still occupying poor communities like Cité Soleil. Support for exiled former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his Lavalas Party is still strong, but it is very hard to show it.

Demonstrations and protests are met with violence and murder, either from the U.N. forces or from the gangs, directed by the most viciously brutal elements of the Haitian bourgeoisie. These groups, with deep ties to the Tonton Macoutes created by the Duvaliers, were used to overthrow the Aristide government after being trained and armed by the U.S.

So when President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela came to Port-au-Prince March 13 to finish up his tour answering Bush's Latin American visit, crowds of people lined the streets in enthusiastic joy, waving home-made Venezuelan flags and shouting: "Down with Bush! Long live Chávez! Long live the return of Aristide!"

Since Venezuela already has an oil deal with Haiti that saves Haiti \$150 million a year, President René Préval had no choice about this demonstration. Haiti, Venezuela and Cuba took the occasion of Chávez's visit to announce a tripartite agreement covering health, energy and oil.

Venezuela already has a program in Haiti where units of its army help repair Haiti's infrastructure.

At the press conference after the agreement announcement, Chávez recalled the substantial aid Haiti gave to Simón Bolívar and José Martí. Préval said that President Fidel Castro of Cuba had participated in the discussions by phone from Havana. □

Colombian wins second round in U.S. courts

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the revolutionary movement in his own country.

Trinidad faced five charges of kidnapping stemming from a February 2003 incident in which a small surveillance plane flown by U.S. military contractors—the new word for mercenaries—crash-landed in territory controlled by revolutionaries in the south of Colombia. The agents—Thomas Howes, Keith Stansell and Marc Gonsalves—have been held captive by the FARC since that time.

Although Trinidad was not involved in the act, prosecutors tried to make it appear he was associated with the events. Thus he was charged with "conspiracy" in the matter. Throughout the original trial, Hogan's evidentiary rulings gave the prosecutors carte blanche while severely limiting the defense, to the extent that Trinidad was the only witness on his own behalf.

Simon Trinidad—2, U.S. gov't—o

Trinidad's eloquent testimony, however, appeared to have been a key factor in dissuading enough jurors from accepting the government's depiction of Trinidad

and the FARC as "terrorists" that they withheld Hogan's repeated pressure to reach a guilty verdict. The prosecutor's secret interviews appeared to be a fishing expedition to find out just what Trinidad had said that swayed the jurors. With this knowledge, they could get Judge Hogan to limit similar lines of defense the second time around.

Tucker called on Hogan to disqualify himself since his "impartiality could reasonably be questioned" after he allowed the prosecution to talk to former jurors to get help with their case in retrial and then sealed the evidence so "no one would find out." In his response to Tucker's motion, prosecutor Kenneth Kohl admitted, "When we prosecute the case the second time, we want to make sure that the jury finds the defendant guilty. ... The government naturally wants to do its homework."

While Hogan's withdrawal from the case was a victory for Trinidad's defense, it doesn't spell the end of the U.S. government's persecution of the prisoner or U.S. interference in Colombia. At a press conference preceding the opening of the trial, Tom Burke of the National Committee to

Free Ricardo Palmera noted, "The fact this trial can take place at all is an affront to Colombian sovereignty. The trial is an extension of Plan Colombia—the undeclared U.S. war against the Colombian people."

Berta Joubert Ceci of the International Action Center denounced the U.S. government's continued support for the government of Colombia, where eight legislators allied with President Álvaro Uribe Vélez have been charged with collaborating with deadly paramilitaries. These paramilitary death squads are responsible for the displacement of millions of poor Colombians and the massacres and assassinations of human rights advocates and social and labor leaders.

"If the United States really wanted democracy and peace in the region and in Colombia in particular," said Joubert, "it would endorse and enforce a political negotiated solution between the insurgency and the government. The humane thing to do is to have a prisoner exchange where Simón Trinidad and Sonia [Anabé Rojas Valderrama] are returned to their country." □

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Bush visita Colombia mientras sale a la luz las realidades de la parapolítica del gobierno

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Colombia recibe la ayuda militar más grande de los EEUU fuera de las regiones en guerra del Medio Oriente y Afganistán. Colombia también va a la cabeza en el número de líderes sindicales asesinados, junto a los altos niveles de desplazamiento de campesin@s, afrocolombian@s e indígenas, y a las masacres y detenciones arbitrarias —todo ello llevado a cabo con completa impunidad para quienes cometen estos crímenes.

Los criminales son mayormente paramilitares que cada vez más está siendo revelado que son colaboradores de muchos de los políticos, congresistas y miembros de la élite colombiana uribista (partidarios del Presidente Álvaro Uribe),

Semanas antes de la turbulenta gira del presidente de los EEUU George W. Bush a cinco países latinoamericanos, acontecimientos importantes ocurrieron en Colombia. Ocho miembros del Congreso fueron arrestados y encarcelados por sus conexiones con los sicarios paramilitares. Entre los detenidos estaban el hermano y el padre de la ex Canciller Consuelo Araújo, quien había sido forzada a renunciar por la presión pública.

Más importante, Jorge Noriega, el jefe de la policía secreta, el DAS, muy cercano a Uribe, está entre ellos. Noriega ha sido acusado de darles a los paramilitares una lista de líderes sindicales. Algunos cuyos nombres aparecen en esa lista fueron eventualmente asesinados.

El mismo presidente está acusado por políticos opositores y muchas organizaciones sociales y de derechos humanos, de haber permitido estos crímenes y también de tener conexiones con los paramilitares.

Hace dos años, en una ceremonia televisada que tuvo mucha publicidad, Uribe comenzó con lo que se refirió como la "desmovilización" de las AUC, las Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, mejor

conocidas como los paramilitares. Parecía que cientos entregaron sus armas. Pero lo que fue denominado como una "pacificación" fue realmente nada más que una reorganización de esas fuerzas criminales.

Ahora se denominan las Águilas Negras, o la "nueva generación" de paramilitares que han estado extremadamente activas a través del país.

El 10 de febrero, fue entregada en las oficinas de la Confederación Unida de Trabajadores, CUT en Bucaramanga, una nota firmada por las Águilas Negras. La nota amenaza al sindicato SINALTRAINAL que representa a 1@s trabajadores de las empresas de la Coca Cola y de Nestlé, y a sus líderes. En una declaración escrita, SINALTRAINAL enfatiza que: "Esta amenaza se produce después que el Vicepresidente de Colombia Francisco Santos en Caracol Noticias el día 12 de diciembre de 2006, al referirse a la intervención que hizo la Fiscalía General de la Nación sobre las finanzas de los clubes del balompié colombiano, afirmó que las campañas de desprecio contra Coca Cola y Nestlé y otras empresas privadas, están siendo impulsados por sectores de extrema izquierda, radical, infiltrados en sectores sindicales, que están generando campañas absolutamente absurdas contra las empresas".

La declaración de SINALTRAINAL muestra la lealtad del gobierno de Colombia hacia las corporaciones transnacionales basadas en los EEUU. También demuestra la criminal falta de responsabilidad de un gobierno que en vez de proteger a su pueblo lo expone al peligro. El presidente y el vicepresidente colombiano saben muy bien que esta clase de acusación es un mensaje a las fuerzas paramilitares para que apunten sus cañones hacia las víctimas.

Uribe mismo ha acusado a Carlos Lozano, redactor de la revista Voz del Partido Comunista de Colombia, de ten-

er conexiones con la guerrilla FARC-EP (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo), y a Gustavo Petro, senador del partido opositor Polo Democrático Alternativo (PDA), de ser un "terrorista vestido de civil". La reacción de Uribe a la revelación de los lazos entre los paramilitares y miembros del Congreso y su jefe de inteligencia, todos miembros de los partidos y organizaciones uribistas, ha sido la de provocar más violencia contra el movimiento social progresista.

Dos días después de la declaración de Uribe, una amenaza de muerte fue enviada a docenas de organizaciones sociales, sindicales, estudiantiles y de medios de comunicación alternativa de parte de la nueva agrupación paramilitar, las Águilas Negras. El hermano de Petro también fue amenazado. Dos miembros del PDA fueron muertos bajo circunstancias aún no esclarecidas.

Los paramilitares han amenazado matar al senador Petro porque él ha influido en revelar esas conexiones. Él visitó a Washington, D.C. la semana del 5 de marzo en un intento de exponer la situación grave en su país. Aquí se reunió con organizaciones no gubernamentales y representantes de varios congresistas para alertarlos sobre el peligro que enfrentan las y los colombianos, particularmente ahora que el Acuerdo de Libre Comercio entre Colombia y los EEUU está siendo discutido.

En una conferencia de prensa el 7 de marzo, Petro explicó la meta de su visita. Primero fue la de proponer la renegociación del Plan Colombia que actualmente transfiere a Bogotá unos \$700 millones anuales principalmente para objetivos militares. Concebido durante la presidencia de Bill Clinton, supuestamente para combatir el narcotráfico, este plan ha proporcionado a Colombia aproximadamente \$4 mil millones. Este dinero ha sido empleado principalmente, bajo el

control de los EEUU, para combatir al movimiento armado revolucionario y para fumigar grandes extensiones de terrenos, poniendo a riesgo la vida y la salud de miles de campesin@s. Es una guerra de facto contra el pueblo de Colombia.

Petro propuso en cambio un Plan Colombia para las víctimas de los paramilitares y de la violencia del estado. Dijo que el poder de los paramilitares reside en su nexo estrecho con un sector importante del estado colombiano, incluso el judicial, lo cual ha permitido que los crímenes queden impunes. "Un diez por ciento de los legisladores hacen leyes por la mañana y por

la noche ordenan masacres. Como programa para combatir el narcotráfico, el Plan Colombia ha fracasado", dijo Petro.

Otro objetivo de la visita de Petro fue renegociar el TLC que ya ha sido firmado por Bush y Uribe pero está pendiente de la confirmación en los Congresos de Colombia y Estados Unidos. Petro se refirió a este acuerdo como uno que beneficia a los paramilitares cuya base financiera es el narcotráfico. Él explicó por ejemplo, que el capítulo del TLC sobre la agricultura perjudicaría al 90 por ciento de los pequeños agricultores y a 15 millones de campesin@s que producen granos y otros alimentos de primera necesidad. Porque la producción que el TLC beneficiaría — como la madera, la goma y la palma africana — requieren de una gran inversión de capital, grandes terrenos y varios años antes de producir la cosecha, solo los "narcoparamilitares" serían los grandes ganadores, al ser ellos también los ricos propietarios de grandes extensiones de terrenos.

Como atestigua la visita de seis horas de Bush a Colombia para apoyar a un Uribe rodeado por escándalos, el gobierno estadounidense no solo ignora la guerra genocida del estado y sus acciones represivas contra los movimientos sociales, sino que ayuda a esta guerra en todos los niveles. La visita del residente de la Casa Blanca a Bogotá tuvo lugar en medio de un despliegue gigantesco de las fuerzas represivas del estado colombiano: 21.000 policías y otros ejércitos nacionales, helicópteros, francotiradores en los techos, cañones de agua, balas de goma y gases lacrimógenos.

La operación de "seguridad" duró casi una semana antes de la llegada de Bush. Incluyó allanamientos extensos. No obstante, las fuerzas opuestas a Bush organizaron manifestaciones en varias ciudades colombianas para repudiar su visita. En Bogotá la policía negó el permiso para las manifestaciones, sin embargo, miles de personas, la mayoría jóvenes, valientemente salieron a las calles donde encontraron la represión brutal de la policía. Al final, según Nikzor, una organización en defensa de los derechos humanos, más de 400 personas habían sido detenidas.

El gobierno estadounidense no solo permite la represión violenta y el genocidio en Colombia a través de las fuerzas del estado y de los paramilitares, cuyas acciones conjuntas han sido ampliamente expuestas, sino que él mismo fue el iniciador del paramilitarismo después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. (www.HRW.org)

Esta guerra estadounidense contra el pueblo colombiano debe estar en un lugar principal en la agenda de todas fuerzas antiimperialistas y antiguerra en los Estados Unidos, porque es una guerra para destruir a las organizaciones y a 1@s líderes progresistas y asegurar que Colombia sea un agente de los Estados Unidos para fomentar guerras contra esos países latinoamericanos en marcha hacia la izquierda.

Próximo: El rol de los Estados Unidos en el paramilitarismo de Colombia; para militares contra Venezuela; entrevista con Iván Cepeda, hijo de un miembro de la Unión Patriótica que fue asesinado.

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